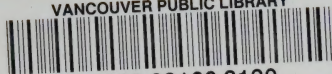


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Helene E. Lowson.

Songs and Sonnets

HELENA
COLEMAN

Published
under the
Auspices
of the
Tennyson
Club
of Toronto


TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1906

Entered according to Act of the
Parliament of Canada, in the year
one thousand nine hundred and six,
by WILLIAM BRIGGS, at the Depart-
ment of Agriculture.

To
A. S. R.

*Within my garden, on the southern side,
Where warm and strong the sun's battalions fall,
The lilies grow superbly white and tall,
The mignonette and phlox spread far and wide;
The roses there are my perpetual pride,
The ivy riots laughing up the wall,
And all my flower-loves, both great and small,
A daily feast of loveliness provide.*

*And deep within the garden of my heart,
Upon that side where thou art wont to shine—
And something of thy sweetness to impart—
There sprang these little wandering songs of mine;
I know not if they show thee what thou art,
But any worthiness they have is thine.*



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INDIAN SUMMER.

OF all Earth's varied, lovely moods,
The loveliest is when she broods
Among her dreaming solitudes

On Indian Summer days;
When on the hill the aster pales,
And Summer's stress of passion fails,
And Autumn looks through misty veils
Along her leafy ways.

How deep the tenderness that yearns
Within the silent wood that turns
From green to gold, and slowly burns

As by some inward fire!
How dear the sense that all things wild
Have been at last by love beguiled
To join one chorus, reconciled
In satisfied desire!

The changing hillside, wrapped in dreams,
With softest opalescent gleams,
Like some ethereal vision seems,
 Outlined against the sky;
The fields that gave the harvest gold—
Afar before our eyes unrolled
In purple distance, fold on fold—
 Lovely and tranquil lie.

We linger by the crimson vine,
Steeped to the heart with fragrant wine,
And where the rowan-berries shine,
 And gentians lift their blue;
We stay to hear the wind that grieves
Among the oak's crisp, russet leaves,
And watch the moving light, that weaves
 Quaint patterns, peering through.

The fires that in the maples glow,
The rapture that the beeches know,
The smoke-wraiths drifting to and fro,
 Each season more endears;
Vague longings in the heart arise,
A dimming mist comes to the eyes
That is not sadness, though it lies
 Close to the place of tears.

We share the ecstasy profound
That broods in everything around,
And by the wilderness are crowned—

Its silent worship know.

O when our Indian Summer days
Divide the parting of the ways,
May we, too, linger here in praise
Awhile before we go!

POSTPONEMENT.

BEHIND their veils of clinging mist,
Elusive as a dream,
In changing rose and amethyst
The mountains stood supreme.

Consumed as by some inward fire
Of brooding mystery,
They held the heart of his desire—
His love and poetry.

And always, ever, some dear time—
So ran his hidden hopes—
He meant to leave his task and climb
Their beckoning emerald slopes,

To scale their precipices bold,
And watch the rose-wreaths rise,
To see the gates of Heaven unrolled
Before his longing eyes.

But always, always, something pressed
Between him and his aim ;
He kept his dream, but gave the rest
To meet the common claim.

He ploughed the black and fertile plain,
And sowed the waiting soil,
And harvested the yellow grain,
And spent his days in toil ;

Nor failed to give a helping hand
When others stood in need ;
But strove to meet each new demand
With patient word and deed.

So went the seasons. Wrapped in mist
The mountains, blue and gold,
Behind their veils of amethyst
Still wait, but—he is old !

EXILED.

GREEN banners just unfurled,
 Summer comes apace,
 There will be a new world
 At the old home place;
 Scarlet wing will flash by,
 Meadow-lark will soar high—
 O, and that is where I
 Turn my longing face!

Never days like those days,
 Never joy like mine;
 All the world a soft haze—
 All the world a shrine!
 Overhead, the blue sheen;
 Underneath, the new green;
 I with beating heart between
 Finding life divine!

Ah! and how the birds sang
Every sunny day,
All the fields and woods rang
With their ecstasy;
How my wanton pulse thrills,
How my homesick heart fills,
Thinking of those green hills
Dear and far away!

FOREST TRAGEDY.

AFLOAT upon the tide one summer night,
Dreamily watching how the moonbeams bright
Made little broken rings of fairy light,

And vaguely lost in that half-conscious mood
That steals upon the sense in solitude,
I drifted near a shadowy island wood

Where all was silent, scarce a leaf was stirred—
So still the air—when suddenly I heard
The piercing, anguished cry as of a bird

In such distress it made the echoes ring
And set the startled silence quivering—
The wild appeal of some sweet feathered thing

In its extremity. And then a sound,
Half-muffled, faint, and all again was drowned
In silence inarticulate, profound.

I went my way; but that despairing cry,
Unheeded and unanswered from on high,
Rang through me like the voice of Destiny.

And in my restless heart the old, deep strain—
The bitter doubt and wild rebellious pain
I thought were laid—came surging up again.

COMRADES.

THEY hollowed her a little grave
Within the cool, dark ground,
The woods and winds soft welcome gave
With many a murmuring sound.

The sighing pines and aspens low
Joined in her funeral hymn,
But they who brought her did not know—
Grief made their senses dim.

And though at first they vigil kept
When in the dark she fared,
They come no more—the fate they wept
Perchance they since have shared.

But there are other friends who stay
Beside her constantly,
And bear her in their humble way
Sweet, steadfast company.

The kindly, patient grass hath spread
A coverlet of green,
And made her little lowly bed
Pleasant to be seen.

Above her head the sheltering trees
Have woven canopies,
The nesting birds and droning bees
Croon her soft lullabies.

The comradeship of field and wood
Grows stronger year by year,
As she becomes to Nature's mood
More intimate and dear.

WHEN ORCHARDS BLOOM.

Now come the days when orchards bloom,
And lilacs are unfolding,
And Nature from the winter's tomb
Fresh loveliness is moulding,
When in the woods there rise anew
Anemone and meadow-rue,
And everywhere the violets blue
High carnival are holding.

When, touched by changing sun and shower,
The chestnut buds are filling,
And purple hyacinths each hour
Fresh fragrance are distilling,
When here and there enchanting notes
Come ringing from impassioned throats,
And flash of blue or scarlet coats
Sets all one's pulses thrilling.

And what of thee, O sullen heart—
Still busy with thy grieving?
Hast thou no little leaves to start,
Thy barrenness retrieving?
Nay, leave thy chamber, come abroad,
See how the apathetic clod
Awakens at the touch of God,
Spring's sacrament receiving.

Wilt thou not answer to the call,
Thy selfish grief forsaking,
And trust the Love behind it all,
Life's promises partaking?
The frailest little flower that blows
A higher dream of Heaven knows
Than he who dully grieving goes
When round him Spring is breaking.

THY PART.

To LOVE and to be loved again
 Was all she ever asked or sought,
 To know a mother's joy and pain
 And be into life's fabric wrought;
 Her simple faith was satisfied
 With what she felt and understood,
 To walk in sunny ways she tried,
 Believing, practising the good.

To others' need and use she brought,
 With constant and unconscious grace,
 The best she had, her only thought
 To be of service in her place.
 The leisured, laughing, careless throng
 By her unheeded went their way,
 But in her eyes a silent song
 Grew ever deeper day by day.

.

Hast thou done reverence in thy heart
 To such as she, who serve and wait—
 Been mindful in thy place and part
 That self-forgetful souls grow great?
 Hast thou her narrower portion made
 By sympathy more large and sweet?
 Or ever branch of laurel laid
 At her unconscious, tireless feet?

Hast thou not eaten of her bread
 And hurried forth forgetfully?
 Or stood, perchance, with unbared head
 And smiled at her simplicity?
 Nay, brother, she who in her soul
 Has kept the altar-fires alight
 May all unconscious touch the goal
 And outrank thee in Heaven's sight.

MATURITY.

“AT life’s great feast,” they said to me,
“The gods serve out the good wine first;
Look to thy cups, drink heartily,
In early hour assuage thy thirst.”

Not so! Though eagerly I quaffed,
Deeming it then well-spiced, good wine,
To me seems now that early draught
Of vintage human—this divine!

ON THE TRAIL.

OH, there's nothing like the prairie
When the wind is in your face,
And a thunder-storm is brewing,
And night comes down apace—
'Tis then you feel the wonder
And immensity of space!

Far in the gathering darkness
Against the dying day
The ghostly hills are lying,
The hills that stand for aye—
How in the dusk they glimmer
And palpitate away!

Behind them still there lingers
A hint of sunset gold;
The trail before you stretches,
A long black ribbon unrolled—
Long and black and narrow,
Where the buffalo trod of old.

Though motionless forever,
The prairies seem to keep
The rolling swell and hollow
Of some undulating deep,
As to the edge of heaven
And still beyond they sweep.

Between your knees the bronco
Goes hotly o'er the plain,
With rhythmic swing and measure
You feel him give and strain,
And on your cheek come stinging
The first wild drops of rain.

How vast the world and void!
No living thing in sight,
As to the lonely prairie
Comes down the lonely night,
But in your heart what freedom—
What sense of buoyant flight!

Once more the pulses quicken
With life's exultant pride,
With hope and high ambition,
As on and on you ride,
Till all the old desires
Come galloping beside!

Oh, there's nothing like the prairie
When the wind is in your face,
And the boom of distant thunder
Comes rolling up apace—
'Tis then you feel the wonder
And immensity of space!

O SUMMER DAYS.

O SUMMER Days, how shall we part!
 To thee I gave mine inmost heart.
 Swift to thy call have been my feet,
 I loved thy raptures and thy heat;
 Thy sunsets and thy evening star
 Have beckoned from their deeps afar.
 Thy winds have taught me to forget—
 O Summer Days, not yet, not yet!
 Thy veery's oft-repeated note
 And oriole's song I've learned by rote,
 Thy nights have filled me with content,
 Thy dawns were as a sacrament.
 The silence of thy forest ways
 Has given peace to troubled days,
 And all thy lovely, leafy things
 Have brought the joy a comrade brings.
 Beneath thy dome of tender blue
 I've learned to measure life anew;
 The absent hope, the lost desire
 Urge me again to something higher,
 And Beauty with her mystic gleam
 Has waked again the old-time dream
 And charmed away the vain regret—
 O Summer Days, not yet, not yet!

GIVE ME NO PITY.

DESTROY me not, O friend, I pray,
With thy well-meaning sympathy;
Give me no pity, but a place
Where falls the sunlight on my face.

The race is to the swift, I know,
The battle to the strong; but Oh!
Full recompense there is for each
When Heaven itself is in our reach.

The widow's gift of old was small,
Yet was it counted more than all;
'Tis what he does, not what he can,
That proves the measure of the man.

And so, if thou would'st have me strong,
Dwell not on what is sad or wrong;
'Tis not in marking how they fail
That men find courage to prevail.

I ask no more than just the chance
To match my will with circumstance,
With what I am in mind and heart
To take my due and play my part.

God showeth me no special grace,
And why should'st thou? Yield me my place—
The right to strive—and spare me, pray,
Thy well-intentioned sympathy.

VOICES OF THE STORM.

WHERE sweeps the broad St. Lawrence
I stood one windy day,
Upon a rocky islet
That faced the open bay,
And watched the breakers leaping
In towers of snow-white spray.

Like some invading army
Upon the rocks they bore,
With clamor and confusion,
And vast tumultuous roar;
Their mists, like smoke of battle,
Rolled white along the shore.

Upon my brow in baptism
Cold, stinging drops were flung,
And in my ears, like music,
The storm's wild chant was rung—
The chorus of the waters,
That knew nor speech nor tongue.

An elemental passion
Was in the stress and sweep,
And all at once responsive
I felt my pulses leap;
There seemed a subtle kinship
Betwixt me and the deep.

I shared its wild commotion,
The springs of its unrest,
The secret of its tumult
Lay hidden in my breast,
And in my heart a nameless
Wild exultation pressed.

Long past the day! Still often
Its mood will o'er me fall;
Again I hear those distant
Storm-voices call and call,
And know this busy getting
And spending is not all.

RETURNING.

WHEN one has journeyed far afield
To see earth's varied treasure,
And taste the joy fresh pastures yield—
Perhaps his greatest pleasure
Is when he turns his footsteps back
Along the old, well-beaten track,
To learn in fuller measure,
Home's quiet joys and friendly cheer
By absence rendered still more dear.

'Tis well to turn the wearied eyes
Where foreign suns are glowing,
And gain the stimulus that lies
Where fresher streams are flowing;
But O, the happy rush of thought
With which the eager hours are fraught
When we are homeward going!
How good the old accustomed place—
How sweet each dear familiar face!

OUR COMMON BROTHERHOOD.

I NEVER saw his face, or knew his name,
But that gay morning as I loitering came
Around the blossoming hillside, all aflame

With lilac spires and apple-blossoms brave,
That to the rifling air their sweetness gave,
I saw where they were making him his grave.

If I had chanced to meet him by the way,
In all the golden sunshine of the day,
No pleasant word I might have found to say;

But since he could no longer come to meet
The world, love-smitten, dreaming at his feet,
Nor feel within his pulse the Spring-tide beat,

Nor love again, I gave for him instead,
And poured upon his low, unconscious head
The sacramental love that shrives the dead.

And though I went my way with eyelids wet
For grief of one whom I had never met,
Because his day so soon was ended, yet

I turned my face up Heavenward again,
Believing human love is not in vain;
And, moved and softened by the sudden strain

Of fellowship, I touched the larger mood
Of universal love, and understood
The passion of our common brotherhood.

I AM CONTENT WITH CANADA.

OF countries far and famed have I been told,
And of the joys that foreign travel brings,
Of wonders, beauties one would fain behold
To stir the heart with fresh imaginings.

And I myself in storied Switzerland
Have watched the Alps in their majestic calm,
And been by jasmine-scented breezes fanned
In tropic isles that bear the stately palm.

And many a fabled castle on the Rhine
Has winged my fancy as we drifted by;
Beside the oleander and the vine
I've dreamed beneath the soft Italian sky.

But I have never been more deeply stirred
By any loveliness of land or sea
Than when upon Canadian shores I've heard
The lonely loon or curlew call to me

Across our own unnumbered Northern lakes,
And over leagues of winding water-ways
Upon whose nameless shores the aspen shakes
And yellows in the soft autumnal haze.

(And O to swing away where all is new,
And share the haunts of shy and tameless things,
To dip one's paddle in the liquid blue
And skim the water lightly as with wings!)

When on the broad St. Lawrence some gray day,
Among those islands wrought of mist and dreams,
I drift to realms of unreality
Where all the world a lovely vision seems;

Or when among the Rockies I have caught
The sudden gleam of peaks above the cloud,
And on the tumult of my quickened thought
New visions, dreams and aspirations crowd;

Or, thinking of the future and of all
That generations yet unborn shall see—
The forests that for axe and ploughshare call,
The wealth of golden harvests yet to be,

I am content with Canada, and ask
No fairer land than has been given me,
No greater joy, no more inspiring task,
Than to upbuild and share her destiny.

A THOUSAND JOYS REMAIN.

LIFE has a thousand raptures still
To crowd the common ways,
For Beauty walks with him who will,
Close comrade of his days.

Each season with its coming brings
A store of fresh delight,
For joy is at the heart of things
For him who sees aright.

O eloquent the light that thrills
Along the morning sky!
O lovely are the dreaming hills
When silent night draws nigh!

The rhythmic sun and stars reveal
Our habitation wide,
Cradled in mystery, still we feel
Secure and satisfied;

And we may kindle when we will
The light in children's eyes,
And learn by loving to fulfil
Our joy in sacrifice.

O, he who keeps an open mind
Wins strength to master pain;
Whatever be denied, he'll find
A thousand joys remain!

MOTHER-BORN.

SINCE fate hath given thee no child
To lie within thine arm,
That by its presence undefiled
Should keep thy soul from harm,

If thou wert truly mother-born
Thou would'st have played the part,
And found some little one forlorn
To fold within thy heart.

MASQUERADERS.

To MY garden every day
Little masqueraders gay
Come to while the hours away.

Gauzy, glittering, fragile things,
Jewelled as befitteth kings,
Floating far on purple wings.

Voyagers of earth and air,
Facing life without a care,
Dainty, dashing, debonair.

Gay adventurers at ease,
Sleek and happy as you please,
Drifting idly with the breeze.

Warriors clad in polished mail,
Fierce for battle tooth and nail—
Well the stoutest heart may quail!

Spurs upon the tiny feet,
Cuirass, helmet, all complete—
Saw you ever aught so neat?

Little brothers in disguise,
Peering forth with curious eyes,
Quaintly humble, quaintly wise;

Plumy pennons half unfurled,
Filmy aigrettes lightly curled—
O, this marvellous, magic world!

WHITHER?

WITHIN the portals of my heart
 There lies a chamber set apart,
 And I to enter there
 Must first be purged of every sin—
 Be purified without, within,
 And girded with a prayer;

For nothing common or unclean
 May ever in that room be seen,
 No taint of sin or woe;
 Up from the midst there runs a stair
 That leads above, I know not where,
 But angels come and go.

I feel the fanning of their wings,
 I hear their low-breathed whisperings—
 They sometimes speak my name!
 And all my soul is softened, thrilled,
 With holy aspirations filled
 I touch the altar-flame.

.

Another chamber lies apart
Within the portals of my heart,
 Whose easy door swings wide;
And when my feet its threshold tread
A tumult in my soul is bred
 That sweeps me like a tide.

And from it, too, there runs a stair
That leads without, I know not where,
 But flitting forms I see,
Who would my spirit fain beguile
With soft beseeching look and smile
 To join their revelry.

And some dark presence hovering near
Constrains me, whispering in my ear—
 Exultant, smooth and bold—
The same alluring, honied word—
The subtle promise Jesus heard
 Upon the Mount of old.

.

Some day the portals of my heart
Shall riven be, and fall apart,
 Touched by a power unknown;
And I, a pallid ghost, must flee
Far out into eternity,
 Unshriven and alone.

In that dread hour of waste and woe
One door shall open wide, I know,
 But only one, to me;
One stair my hurrying feet must tread,
As I go forth to join the dead—
 O Soul, which shall it be?

IN THE GARDEN.

THE roses blushed a deeper red,
The lilies looked more saintly,
The sweet-alyssum hung its head,
And smiled and frowned most quaintly;
The daisies even, at my feet,
Were strangely knowing, strangely sweet;

The hollyhocks against the wall,
So serious and old-fashioned,
Were all astir, the larkspur tall
Seemed really quite impassioned.
I pondered, but I could not guess
What made their sudden consciousness.

Where'er I looked, their little eyes
Were eager, wise and tender,
As if they had some new surprise
Or sympathy to render—
But, turning round all unaware,
I saw that *she* was standing there!

CAUGHT UP ON WINGS.

CAUGHT up on wings am I!
The rapture of the sky
Is mine as in my flight
Through boundless spaces bright—
Delirium of light—
I soar on high—on high—
Till Heaven itself is nigh—
Caught up on wings am I!

In bonds but yesterday
A prisoner I lay,
The song unguessed, unheard,
The hope—the dream unstirred,
As mounts the singing bird
To realms of ecstasy,
I mount upon my way
And speed aloft to-day.

My own has come to me
And set my spirit free,
No more enchained I dwell,
The speeding arrow fell—
Wrought was the miracle,
Far realms beyond I see,
The best is yet to be—
My own has come to me!

INVOCATION.

THE long-closed doors have opened wide,
 Come in, Beloved, partake, abide,
 Make home with me;
 I'll weave a chaplet for thy brow
 Of bitter-sweet and rue, and thou
 Shalt crownèd be.

The grapes hang purpling on the wall,
 The flagons brim, the apples fall,
 The hours run fast;
 Gray shadows lengthen, toward the west
 The sun is turning—be my guest
 While day shall last!

The fire upon the altar burns,
 The tide is in, the light returns
 Far out at sea;
 The heart that hath so long been dumb
 Speaks once again: Beloved, come,
 Make home with me.

CANDLE-FLAME.

HAST singed thy pretty wings, poor moth?
Fret not; some moths there be
That wander all the weary night,
Longing in vain to see
The light.

Hast felt the scorching flame, poor heart?
Grieve not; some hearts exist
That know not, grow not to be strong,
And weep not, having missed
The song.

THE DISTANT GOAL.

I BUILDED me a palace fair,
Untouched of pain, remote from care,
And with my dreams I tarried there.

I tarried there for one brief day,
Then sorrow came and had its way—
My house of hope in ruins lay.

But, girded with a strength unknown
Before its joy was overthrown,
My soul arose and stood alone;

And gazing past life's sore defeat,
Past earth receding at its feet—
With all the beauty magic-sweet—

Beyond the reach of time and chance,
And wrecking tides of circumstance,
It saw as in a lightning glance

The distant goal. O not in vain
These earthly crucibles of pain,
In every loss may still be gain!

And though we know not how or whence,
Denial hath its recompense,
And love its hidden, sure defence.

MY ROSES.

GLOWING, passionate, perfect,
Crimson fold on fold,
Packed with that exquisite beauty
Only a rose can hold—
Under the velvet petals
Hints of hidden gold.

(And oh! the swift enchantment,
Half pain, half ecstasy,
When Beauty for a moment
Turns and looks our way—
In her eyes the haunting
Old, sweet mystery!)

Others saw my roses,
Thought them lovely too,
Praised their form and fragrance,
Marvelled at their hue—
Others loved my roses—
’Twas only I that knew!

'Twas only I that fathomed
 Their innermost hearts of flame,
To me alone their beauty
 A sacrament became—
To me alone they whispered
 The secret of your name!

LOVE'S HIGHER WAY.

CONSTRAIN me not! Dost thou not know
That if I turn from thee my face
'Tis but to hide the overflow

Of love? We need a little space
And solitude in which to kneel
And thank our God for this high grace

That He hath set His holy seal
Upon our lives. My heart doth burn
With consciousness of all I feel

And own to thee, and if I turn
For one brief moment from thy gaze,
'Tis but that I may better learn

To bear the unaccustomed blaze
Of that white light that like a flame
Thy love has set amidst my days.

For with that clearer light there came
A vision of the far-off sea
We mortals know not how to name,

That borders on Infinity.
Since when I am not all my own,
Nor wholly thine—some part of me

Responds to God, and God alone.
For love makes silence in the heart
As well as song, and rolls the stone

From buried selves, and makes us part
Of all that was and is to be—
High-priests of life; and though thou art

Revealer and revealed to me,
And my desire has been fulfilled,
And all my life is crowned in thee,

Yet there remains a chord that, thrilled
To keener sense, doth recognize
The spirit claim, and I am stilled

With deepened reverence that lies
Below all speech. Behold I lay
My heart in thine, O bid me rise

To find with thee Love's higher way
That leads past self into the wide,
Still reaches of eternal day!

THE SEED.

SCARCE had my flower bloomed when one
 By one its crimson petals fell;
 Touched by some change inscrutable
 Its life and loveliness were done.

And with it something in my heart
 Suddenly passed and was no more,
 As if a hand had closed the door
 Where Beauty, dreaming, sat apart.

O life, O loveliness, how brief!
 How soon the costly wine is spilled—
 The casket sealed, the laughter stilled!
 But O, how long, how endless, grief!

So musing, mourning, I complained,
 When lo! a seed replaced my flower;
 All that was drawn from sun and shower
 In substance still to me remained.

.

A voyager, this tiny barque,
That breasts the sea of change and loss,
What power fashioned it to cross
The wide abysses of the dark?

Shall not that Power in some sphere
Beyond our finite reach or ken
Bring into life and bloom again
The good we sought to fashion here?

BUT THEY REMEMBER NOT.

HIS mother wrought as only mothers can,
And gave the impress to the coming man,
Put all her earlier aims and hopes aside,
Focussed in him her whole desire and pride,
Nor spared herself, but toiling early, late,
Hewed through their poverty a pathway straight
For his young footsteps—gave him all she had,
And sent him forth an honest, whole-souled lad.

His wife, the guardian of his later ways,
The star and inspiration of his days,
Relieved him of those trivial, tyrant cares
That lurk about our feet like hidden snares,
And set him free for higher thought and deed;
Making her heart a home to meet his need
As only women can, she gave surcease
Of grinding stress and fenced him in with peace.

And he?—Before him burned the steadfast light
Their hands had held to guide his way aright;
By it he reached the summit of his aim,
The goal of his endeavor, and became
The idol of his day. But they who sound
His fame remember not the lives uncrowned
On which he stands—the narrow, obscure ways
Two women trod to wreath his name with praise.

THROUGH THE SILENCE.

WHEN o'er my garden falls the night,
 Withholding from my ravished sight
 The roses red, the lilies white,
 Still through the dark am I aware
 Of how they stand in beauty there,
 Since to the timid, wandering air
 Each fragrant bloom its passion flings
 And to my sense fresh rapture brings
 From all the lovely hidden things.

So is it with my thought of thee;
 For through the darkness still I see
 That gracious look thou gavest me.
 And though our ways lie far apart,
 Yet through the distance to my heart
 The fragrant sense of what thou art
 Brings something delicate and true
 That thrills the shining silence through
 And wakens all my love anew.

CONQUEST.

I TRIM to the gale, I carry my banner unfurled,
I steer to a chart unseen and unknown of the world.

I challenge the fates, I laugh in the face of defeat,
I look from afar and know not the sign of retreat.

The chosen went forth, I stood with them not on the
roll,
I stood in my place uncalled and was valiant of soul.

Denial has been my armor well-tempered and bright,
From pain I have woven banners both crimson and
white.

From out of the dark I forged me a trumpet and blew,
From out of the dark came ringing a voice that I knew.

The victors returned, I heard them come marching in
line.

The victors returned—the conqueror's triumph was
mine!

My vigils are filled with the sound of the trumpeter's
song,

I wait for the dawn content, I have seen and am
strong.

LOVE'S SEASONS.

WHEN first you came, it was perpetual Spring,
 Fourfold of rapture flamed in everything,
 And all abroad the gods went wandering.

Then followed Summer, full, luxuriant;
 We wrought together, and our days were spent
 In love's fulfilment and life's sacrament.

'Tis Autumn now, and all that went before—
 The joy of Spring, the Summer's golden store—
 We harvest in our hearts to fail no more.

To fail no more? When winter storms must sweep
 Across the shrines where we were wont to keep
 Love's sacred tryst, and soon—so soon shall sleep?

Yea, Love, whate'er betide, I know the seed
 Of what was wrought in faithful love and deed
 Shall but lie dormant waiting higher need.

CONFIDENCE.

Flow on, flow on, wild hurrying tide,
There waits for thee
Fulfilment of thy dream, the wide
Deep-bosomed sea.

And thou, wild heart, press on, nor fear
But there shall be
In some wide sphere, afar or near,
A home for thee.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE PLACE.

ABOUT the old deserted place,
So long forsaken and forlorn,
There lingers still a touch of grace,
A fragrance every year new-born.

For lilacs there in Spring unfold
Beside the long unopened door,
Communion still they seem to hold
With those who come and go no more.

Against the window-frame they lean,
Their banners floating to the air,
And spread their arms as if to screen
The silent shadows lurking there.

Pale spires uplifted to the sun
Break into bloom as if to fill,
In memory of days long done,
The empty place with fragrance still.

As if with beauty they would hide
The fallen fortunes of the race,
Still cherishing with love and pride
The old traditions of the place.

So year by year they closer press,
And every season slowly spread,
Praising with silent loveliness
The unknown, long-forgotten dead.

TO A BLUEBELL.

I WATCH thy little bells of blue,
So delicate of form and hue,
And when I see them swing and sway
I listen for the chimes to play;
But dull has grown the mortal ear,
And I can never, never hear
The dainty tunes, but only guess
Their music from thy loveliness.

Dost thou announce the day new-born,
And ring the changes of the morn,
And summon for an early mass
The little peoples of the grass,
That they may give fresh meed of praise
For sun and rain and summer days?
Dost thou the moon's late rising tell,
And sound at eve a curfew bell?

When drowsy bees go loitering,
And butterflies are on the wing,
Dost beat the merry music out,
And swell the rhythm of the rout?
Dost ever some faint message sound
For all the wee folk of the ground,
Of those far mysteries that lie
Beyond their ken in earth and sky?

Keep thou thy silence, fairy bell,
Thou art no less a miracle;
No less a rapture thou dost bring
Because we cannot hear thee ring;
For they who give attentive ear
Must catch thy silvery cadence clear,
And know a joy no language tells,
When in the heart there sings and swells
The music of thy magic bells.

INACTION.

MY giants are fair days and hours of ease,
Wherein I seem
Adrift upon a stream
Of luring, lulling phantasies
In some enchanted dream.

More to be welcomed were the battle-plain,
Where drum and fife
Call to the deadly strife,
For coward self may there be slain,
The hero brought to life.

THE VOICES OF OUR DAY.

How shall we bring to one clear tone
The divers voices of our day,
Or what authority obey
Where tongues arise, confused, unknown?

How shall we in the clamor give
To each an undivided ear,
Or through discordant doctrines hear
The still, small voice imperative?

Where devious roadways twist and cross
How shall we find the narrow way
That leads afar to endless day,
Past all this fevered fret and loss?

Can doubting spirits ever thrust
Their roots deep to the heart of life?
Or bear above its toil and strife
The fruit of steadfast love and trust?

When in the wilderness we roam,
And from afar strange voices call,
And night's uncertain shadows fall,
How shall we know which way leads home?

GIFTS.

HEPATICAS and violets blue,
 And lilies with the fragrant bell—
 Ah! they can speak the love so true
 I have no other way to tell,
 And so to one for tribute meet,
 I bring my flowers, dewy, sweet.

And there is one I love full well
 Beneath whose tender brooding eyes
 Such little songs as in me dwell
 Are gathered into melodies,
 And heart to heart doth softly reach
 By music's mystic, yearning speech.

And still is one with whom I share
 Such wisdom as the years have taught
 Through sacrament of daily care
 That life's experience has wrought;
 To counsel him, console, uplift,
 Keep step with step—this is my gift.

And what remains, Beloved, for thee,
To whom I fain all things would be?
Alas, for thee the wounds and pain,
 The piercing thorn, the searing rod,
The stroke that cleft my life in twain,
 The chastisement that was of God—
These are my only offering,
For, O! myself to thee I bring.

SINCE READING MAETERLINCK.

I USED to think the honey-bee
 A harmless little fellow,
 An animated symphony
 Done up in brown and yellow,
 But since I read my Maeterlinck
 I really don't know what to think!

Such marvellous sagacity
 And delicate acumen,
 Such zeal and pertinacity
 Are really more than human;
 Such order, industry and law
 Inspire me with the deepest awe.

Republican in principle
 Is laid their constitution,
 And every little waxen cell
 Accords with evolution;
 Their national life is most complex—
 Nor merely to be thought reflex!

The queen and all her acolytes
Are carefully defended,
The drones and all the lesser lights
Are also well attended;
That they can fashion queen or drone
Most undeniably is shown.

They practise every secret art,
Nature herself defying,
And to the death each plays his part—
'Tis really stupefying;
One questions if great Socrates
Knew half as much as honey-bees!

I almost feel I should forsake—
It seems such desecration—
The honey that I used to take
With so much delectation
As if one ate the very flowers—
The hearts of happy summer hours!

If ever country life to you
Seems dull and overrated,
And you would have a point of view
Both fresh and elevated,
Read up on Bees, by Maeterlinck,
He'll show you how to see and think!

RECALL.

MY cares this morning when I rose
Seemed mountainous. I had no joy
In what the long hours might disclose—
The tasks that should my powers employ.

Within my heart lurked gnawing pain,
Hard duty stared me in the face—
How much of life we live in vain,
How dull the round and commonplace!

But in my garden where I stepped
I saw the flowering grasses fair,
Feathery, delicate, wind-swept,
Swaying in simple beauty there;

And presently a little child.
Whose wondering face was like a shrine,
Lifted untroubled eyes and smiled
With sudden happiness to mine.

And wide above me stretched the skies—
The deep unfathomable blue,
Emblem of greater mysteries,
Forever old, forever new.

With beauty lavished everywhere,
With love still ours in priceless store—
And back of all the unseen Care—
O faithless heart, what would'st thou more?

EACH HATH HIS OWN.

EACH hath his own. To thee the light
 That broods in tender eyes—
 To me the darkness and the blight
 Of lonely wasting sighs.

In fields where fruits and flowers press,
 With manna thou wert fed;
 In many a thorny wilderness
 My bleeding feet were led.

God's face shone through the stars for thee,
 And life came tender-wise;
 Through sorrow's mists He looked at me—
 My portion, sacrifice.

For thee there shone in distant gleams
 Illimitable day;
 I drank from Marah's bitter streams,
 And went my lonely way.

I would not change! To each his own;
 The rugged steeps I trod
 Familiar to my feet have grown,
 And yet may lead to God.

NOT ON A CHOSEN DAY.

Nor in the lingering caress
 Doth love its purest rapture gain,
 Words have no power to express
 Our highest flights of joy or pain.

The soul in quietness alone
 Attains the hidden source of power,
 The truth most deeply of us known
 Comes in the solitary hour.

Nor is it on a chosen day
 Shall dawn the gift that satisfies,
 But in its own dear time and way
 And with the sweetness of surprise.

'Tis when the heart is least aware
 That Beauty softly steals within,
 To call us from our dwarfing care
 And make us to herself akin.

Nor can we ever at our will
 Evoke the higher vision true,
 But we can listen and be still
 And let the Infinite shine through.

THE SOUL BEHIND.

O LOVELY is the human face,
Its curves and color, form and grace
 So tenderly combined;
But O, however fair it be
It is not beautiful to me
Nor full of charm unless I see
 The living soul behind!

And lovely are Earth's various moods,
Her winter snows, her summer woods,
 Her meadows green and broad;
But O, I find no loveliness
In mountain, sea or sky unless
Their changing forms to me express
 The changelessness of God!

NEIGHBORS.

ALL day within the mine's deep grave
 The heat and dust and gloom he bore
 Right valiantly, a willing slave,
 To win—a little heap of ore!

His neighbor on the hill-top stood
 To feel the winds blow on his face,
 Or roamed within the silent wood,
 Lost in the beauty of the place.

Of Nature's handicraft a few
 Frail blossoms gathered by the way,
 Some grasses and a shell or two
 Were all he had at close of day.

Adjudge, ye wise, which of the twain
 On that sweet summer day won most;
 How shall we measure loss or gain—
 On what achievement make our boast?

O, is there not a place for each?
 One wins his soul by sweat of brow,
 Another by the inward reach,—
 And God hath need of both, I trow.

CRIMSON BUDS ARE ON THE MAPLE.

CRIMSON buds are on the maple,
 Thrilling notes are in the air,
 There is green upon the hillside—
 There is beauty everywhere.
 In the woods pale starry blossoms
 Rise like spirits frail and fair.

From the fence the flash of blue wings
 Gives the heart a sudden stir,
 From the thicket by the wayside
 What sweet melodies occur!
 (O, the unseen hands that beckon
 From the heart of days that were!)

All along the dreaming meadows
 There are voices faint but clear,—
 Wake, my heart, and listen, listen,
 If perchance thou mayest hear
 Wordless messages that carry
 Only to the spirit ear.

Life is here in full abundance,
 Overflowing, potent, sweet,
Youth with all his old-time rapture
 Waits for undelaying feet,
Love in old and new disguises
 Makes the loveliness complete.

PRAIRIE WINDS.

I LOVE all things that God has made
That show His ordered care and might,
But most, I think, I love the wind
That blows at night.

It holds so much of mystery,
Like that in mine own restless heart—
Brother to me and well-beloved,
O Wind, thou art!

Across these unresisting plains
It sweeps at times with force sublime,
And always like the wraith it seems
Of happier clime.

For in the South its home has been,
A sun-kissed, warm and fertile land,
Where Nature pours her treasure from
Unstinting hand.

Through fields of rustling corn it came
And acres broad of bearded wheat,
Past hillsides clad with evergreen
And orchards sweet.

It rifled scent from clover fields
Where harvesters have been at work,
And ruffled little running brooks
Where mosses lurk.

It bears the note of piping frogs,
The stir of tender, untried wings—
Of lowing kine, and homely sounds
Of barnyard things.

O barren Land! what dost thou dream
Beneath these surging winds that bear
The echoes of a life which thou
Canst never share?

Dost thou not long to break thy calm—
To know that living, sweet unrest?
And feel the tread of busy feet
Upon thy breast?

To hear thy children's laughter voiced
In myriad tongues, and know that when
Their day is done within thy breast
They'll sleep again?

O silent Land! the winds that blow
Within men's hearts and fan the fire
Of hidden hopes and show the soul
Its own desire,

Have come to me from distant shores
And borne in broken whisperings
A tale that thrilled me like a tide
From rising springs.

The full-pressed wine of life my lips
Have never tasted, yet is known,
My heart, though held in bondage, leaps
To claim its own.

I know my lawful heritage,
Although I stand on alien ground;
I know what kingship is, although
I go uncrowned.

.

At night when inner tempests blow,
And sleep forsakes my weary eye,
I love to hear the wind without
Go storming by.

It speaks my own wild native tongue
And gives me courage to withstand,
As if a comrade came to me
And took my hand.

I love all things that God has made
In earth or sea or heavens bright,
But most I love the prairie winds
That blow at night.

LULLABY.

O'ER the water faintly gleams
Tender light from silvery beams,
O'er thy face flit shadowy dreams,
Sleep, my baby, sleep.

Through unmeasured deeps of space
Earth, thy cradle, swings apace,
Safe art thou in thy nesting-place,
Sleep, my baby, sleep.

At the heart of life art thou,
Thorns and roses even now
Grow to pierce and crown thy brow,
Sleep, my baby, sleep.

Love for thee was freely spent,
Love and life to thee were sent,
Thou their holiest sacrament,
Sleep, my baby, sleep.

Laden with their unknown freight
Come the years, the ships of fate,
Thou must waken soon or late,
Sleep, my baby, sleep.

ACHIEVEMENT.

A SUDDEN turn—at last was scaled
The summit of his aim,
The cheer went up, his name was hailed
With generous acclaim.

But he for whom they raised the shout
And wreathed the shining bay
Strove in his soul with new-born doubt,
And silent turned away.

Before his vision there arose,
Like spectres of the night,
The nameless company of those
Who perished in the fight;

The host baptized in blood and tears,
Outstripped upon the way,
To whom the gray monotonous years
Bring no redeeming day;

The hapless, toiling, tired throng
Who sow but never reap,
And through their weary lives one long
Unceasing vigil keep.

And as he gazed there rose and burned
An anguish in his soul,
His earlier dreams forgot, he turned
Back from the hard-won goal ;

Back to the crowded ways to bear
The common lot again,
To mingle tears with tears, and share
Life's heritage of pain.

There, though he bears no meed of praise,
Yet, rounded with content,
He knows a joy that far outweighs
The world's aggrandisement.

WHEN AUTUMN COMES.

WHEN Spring first breathes on the russet hill,
In her own faint, lovely fashion,
One's pulses stir with a sudden thrill;
But when Autumn comes the heart stands still,
Moved with a deeper passion.

There's a wonderful charm in the soft, still days
When earth to her rest is returning,
When the hills are drowned in a purple haze,
When the wild grape sweetens, and all in a blaze
Of crimson the maples are turning.

Open thy gates, O heart of mine!
These are the days we have waited,
Put to thy lips the draught divine,
These are the days that hold the wine
Of Summer concentrated.

ANALOGY.

I.

WHILE yet 'twas dark mine eyes were formed to see;
In silence ears were shapen unto me.

Ere I traversed the subtle ways of thought
Within the sealèd crypt a brain was wrought.

And delicately fashioned was the hand,
Though all unknown the task it should command.

Yet these are but the parts; what of the whole—
The man compact, complete, a living soul?

Shall that which grew within him year by year—
Knowledge and judgment, mastery of fear,

The dawning dream of kindlier brotherhood,
And that dim hope, so little understood,

Which seems to beckon to some higher end
Than yet he has the power to comprehend—

Shall these prove fallow, and the finished man
Be unrelated to the final plan?

II.

CAN man know longing for a thing
That is not—hath not been?
Dare we distrust desires that spring
Spontaneous within?

Tongue argueth speech; and power, deed—
Each is by each implied;
Can there be universal need
Unmet, unsatisfied?

The heart attuned to love doth find
Love waiting at the door,
He who to knowledge turns his mind
Finds knowledge there before,

And shall the deepest want we know,
The spirit's anguished cry
For kinship through the darkness, go
Unanswered from on high?

NIGHT AMONG THE THOUSAND ISLANDS.

MYSTERIOUS falls the moon's transforming light
On lichen-covered rock and granite wall,
Comes piercing through the hollows of the night
The loon's weird, plaintive call.

Like some great regiment upon the shore
The stalwart pines go trooping up the hill,
And faintly in the distance o'er and o'er
Echoes the whip-poor-will.

Like silhouettes the dreaming islands keep
Their silent watches, mirrored in the tide,
While in their labyrinthine aisles some deep,
Still mystery seems to hide.

From out the shadows dim against the sky
Come stealing shadow-ships not made of men,
Faint phantom-barques that slowly drifting by
Are swallowed up again.

While silently beneath, the river flows,
Unfathomed, dark, a great resistless tide,
Within its bosom deep the virgin snows
From many a mountain-side.

And, drifting with the current, how we feel
The haunting witchery of Beauty's spell!
The world we left behind seems all unreal,
Where such enchantments dwell.

The vexing cares that overfill our days
Slip stealthily away, and we are wooed
Back to the healing, half-forgotten ways
Of peace and solitude.

AMONG THE PINES.

LIKE Druid priests, dark-vestured, slim,
 Burdened with mysteries,
They wake throughout their green aisles dim
 Weird melodies.

Rhythmic within their swaying limbs
 The prisoned music swells,
Far cadence of cathedral hymns
 And calling bells.

The infinite loneliness of night,
 Bereft of joy or pain,
And passion of long-lost delight
 Ebb in the strain.

The wash of low, monotonous waves
 On shores unvisited,
The grasses whispering on graves
 Where hearts have bled,

The travail of a world that lies
Below our mortal sense
Within their plaintive wandering sighs
Finds utterance.

The dreaming and unconscious things
Imprisoned in the clod
Voice through them when the night-wind sings
Their thought of God.

OPPORTUNITY.

HAST thou been driven to the wall?—
Sound once again thy battle-call.
Thou knowest not what store of strength
Determination yields at length;
When all the outer forces fail
Sheer inner courage may prevail.

Art thou from service set aside—
Thy cherished hope and work denied?
The greatest task of all may be
To show steadfast serenity.
Not all is lost while we may make
One comrade stronger for our sake.

Doth age creep over thee apace?
Set smiling to the dark thy face,
And make the flame of thy soul's light
Burn as a beacon in the night,
That those who follow thee may show
Like fortitude, and fearless go.

The dying hero's courage still
The heart of all a world can thrill,
The martyr's smile above the pyre
Still kindles in us sacred fire,—
No less thy darkest hour may be
Thy deathless opportunity.

ALIEN.

I DWELT among you, but ye laid
 No hand in mine,
I sought your kindness, but ye made
 No answering sign.

I called ye, but ye hurried by,
 On pleasure bent,
The smiling lip, the kindling eye
 For others meant.

My rose I plucked with trembling hand
 And brought to you,
But at your feet it withered, and
 Ye never knew.

I hungered, thirsted, at your side,
 Ye gave no heed;
With plenty ye were satisfied,
 Nor felt my need.

.

I have not gone uncomforted,
 Though lonely oft;
The dewy grass has been my bed,
 The starlight soft

Above, around my way was shed,
 And I have been
By cooling stream and fountain led
 In pastures green.

And peace through doubting days and nights
 I have attained—
But O if ye had known, what heights
 I might have gained!

SEPTEMBER COMES AGAIN.

AND now September! in whose languid veins
The wine of summer, slow-distilling, flows;
The light and glory fade—the laughter wanes,
But earth more lovely grows.

O rare September! has it all been said—
The wistful hours, the soft, reluctant days,
When Nature seems to pause with arms outspread
And heart that yearns both ways?

Upon the mellowed harp-strings of the vine
The fitful winds their soft forebodings urge,
And with the liquid murmurs of the pine
In plaintive sweetness merge.

The mountains, veiled in gold and amethyst,
Their once familiar outlines scarcely show;
Across the uplands, faint with purple mist,
The oaks and maples glow.

Those gathering mists the coming change would hide,
But in our hearts already sounds the knell.
O, never surges love in such a tide
As when we say farewell!

Yet come, September! All the old desires,
The old enchantments, at thy touch return—
'Tis in our hearts thy August-kindled fires
In deepest rapture burn.

And in our hearts the ancient melody
That Earth has yielded of her joy and pain,
Comes softly stealing, echoed back from thee
In one surpassing strain.

Still Summer waits, her mood with thine akin,
As if her love could not release its hold
Until her little hosts were folded in
Against the coming cold—

Against the cold till March once more unlocks
The gates of frost and rives the icy chain,
And June returns to lead her little flocks
Across the fields again—

Across the fields, beyond the shining hill,
When Pan plays up his pipes o' love and pain—
But now, O heart of mine, be still, be still,
September comes again!

NO GRIEF FOR ME.

No grief for me, or vain regret;
Remember what was good,
The things for which I stood;
The rest—forget!

Remember, though the way was long
And cumbersome the load,
I tried to take the road
With jest and song.

And though my days were sometimes spent
In loneliness apart,
I bore a soldier's heart,
Fearless, content.

Remember all that made me glad,
The flowers that used to bloom
Within the little room,
The joys I had.

The blessings manifold and dear
With which life was inwrought,
The hidden wells of thought—
The hopes, the cheer.

Remember these, my love, and let
My memory remain
Untouched of grief or pain;
The rest—forget!

THE OPEN GATE.

THERE was a little garden set apart
Secluded and inviolate in my heart,

A tender place, where there were wont to grow
The sweetest flowers ever heart can know.

And oft at eventide I wandered there
To plan my days or lift my thoughts in prayer.

But by and by there gathered at the gate
A throng that importuned me early, late:

“O, let us in to see your garden fair,
Its fragrance and its pleasantness to share,

“To walk with you amidst the cooling shade
And count your pretty flowers ere they fade.”

And so at last—perchance with secret pride—
I drew the bolt and flung the portals wide,

When in there trooped a careless, motley throng,
With curious glances hurrying along.

Some stayed to question and to criticize,
But scarcely heard or heeded my replies;

Some looked about with cold, contemptuous gaze,
And some were loud and voluble in praise.

And so they came and went, but since that hour
There has not bloomed for me one little flower.

Sonnets

MORE LOVELY GROWS THE EARTH.

MORE lovely grows the earth as we grow old,
 More tenderness is in the dawning spring,
 More bronze upon the blackbird's burnished wing,
 And richer is the autumn cloth-of-gold;
 A deeper meaning, too, the years unfold,
 Until to waiting hearts each living thing
 For very love its bounty seems to bring,
 Intreating us with beauty to behold.

Or is it that with years we grow more wise
 And reverent to the mystery profound—
 Withheld from careless or indifferent eyes—
 That broods in simple things the world around—
 More conscious of the Love that glorifies
 The common ways and makes them holy ground?

IN OCTOBER.

(ON THE UNIVERSITY LAWN.)

TOUCHED by October's changing frost and heat,
 The ivy flames upon the gray old walls,
 Or, whirled by sudden, fitful breezes, falls
 In little crimson showers at our feet;
 Impetuous Spring and lingering Autumn meet
 On these wide lawns and in the echoing halls,
 For Summer with its golden bounty calls
 To hearts that still with youth and promise beat.

These Norman towers uplifted to the sun
 A nation's hope enshrine, a nation's pride,
 And one can scarcely look unmoved upon
 The nation's youth now gathering to their side,
 So great the future to be lost or won—
 So sweet the siren-songs, so swift the tide!

AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

AS FAR as sight could reach the wild peaks rose,
Tier after tier against the limpid blue,
Titanic forms that stormed the heavens anew
At every turn, crowned with imperial snows;
And then, as day sank softly to its close,
Diaphanous, ethereal they grew,
Mere wraiths of rainbow-mist that from our view,
Dream-laden, lapsed to darkness and repose.

And suddenly I found my vision blurred,
And knew that deeper chord was touched again
Which once in Hungary, when I had heard
A passionately wild, appealing strain
Of gypsy music, left me strangely stirred
With incommunicable joy and pain.

AT SUNSET.

FROM green to gold, from gold to amethyst,
Transmuted by the sun's last lingering ray,
The tranquil hills in dreaming silence lay,
Wrought to a beauty eye could not resist;
Till, folded in with veils of purple mist
That slowly wrapt them from reluctant day,
They mingled with the dusk and flowed away,
Renewing with the stars their nightly tryst.

And as the soft enchantments round us spread,
And twilight with its pensive shadows fell—
Loosed from the prison-wards of care and dread,
Lured from our selfish griefs by beauty's spell—
Along dim thoroughfares our thoughts were led
To haunts of peace where love and silence dwell.

THE PROSPECTOR.

LURED by the golden glamor of the West,
He crossed the pathless plains and scaled the bold
Titanic forms that, rising fold on fold,
Touch heaven's blue; and, toiling, strove to wrest
From Nature's rugged and reluctant breast
The treasure she had hidden there of old—
The treasure of her hoarded yellow gold—
Seductive hope of many a hapless quest!

For this he left all other hopes behind,
And gave his manhood's prime and powers away,
Content to be forgotten of his kind—
Yet all the while within himself there lay
The unregarded treasure of the mind,
Deep-buried, priceless, wasting day by day.

AS DAY BEGINS TO WANE.

ENCOMPASSED by a thousand nameless fears,
I see life's little day begin to wane,
And hear the well-loved voices call in vain
Across the narrowing margin of my years;
And as the Valley of the Shadow nears,
Such yearning tides of tenderness and pain
Sweep over me that I can scarce restrain
The gathering flood of ineffectual tears.

Yet there are moments when the shadows bring
No sense of parting or approaching night,
But, rather, all my soul seems broadening
Before the dawn of unimagined light—
As if within the heart a folded wing
Were making ready for a wider flight.

QUESTION NOT.

OH, there are moments when the spirit swings
 Far from restraining hands of earth and time,
 And in some finer, more ethereal clime
 Outspreads its quivering, rosy-tinted wings;
 There Hope untamed beside it soars and sings,
 And all the liquid bells of Fancy chime,
 And earth's harsh measures smooth themselves to
 rhyme,
 And Joy with old and new enchantment springs.

Oh, question not such moments, nor dispel
 Their ministry by cold and captious doubt.
 We are too worldly-wise and critical—
 Too little used to let our music out.
 To earth-bound souls becomes inaudible
 The heavenly music hovering about.

MONOTONY.

UNREALIZED, the dim hours come and go,
A hooded, listless file of shadows pale;
Men's deeds like visions pass, and scarce avail
To stir dull thought or give it ebb or flow;
The hopes that pushed us Heavenward once, aglow
With passionate desire, now flag and fail;
The lights have vanished, and the wine grown stale,
The blade is rusted and unstrung the bow.

Oh, better far to climb the toilsome height
Than linger in the valley's flowered way,
Far better in a losing cause to fight
Than feel one's sinews wasting day by day;
Give me the hemlock draught and dreamless night,
Before this daily death of apathy!

A PRAYER.

Lord, if thy world of beauty fails to rouse
My apathetic soul to faith in thee,
And I in swelling bud and blossom see
No sign of all their loveliness avows;
If, set upon Life's consecrated brows,
Thy seal remains invisible to me,
And I, unmindful of the inner plea,
No other interest than self espouse,

Then stab my soul awake with conscious sin;
Pierce through my cold complacence, and reveal
The death to which indifference is akin,
Till, overwhelmed by shame and guilt, I feel
The smooth, self-righteous Pharisee within
Give place and, humbled, at thy threshold kneel.

MILLET'S ANGELUS.

ENVELOPED by the sunset's crimson glow,
That all the dreaming landscape glorifies,
The peasants wait, while softly swells and dies
Across the furrowed fields the Angelus low;
Earth-stained and worn with toil, how should they know
What loveliness around and in them lies—
Seen with the passion of a painter's eyes,
Who once divined and fixed it long ago?

To me, beholding, comes the quickening thought
That we so close to earth, bowed with the stress
Of daily toil and hopes that come to naught—
Our senses dulled with grieving—hardly guess
What meaning from it all might not be wrought
To beauty by some higher consciousness.

AS ONE EMBARKING.

AS ONE embarking turns deep-visioned eyes
Back to his fast-receding native shore,
Whose crystal tides shall ebb and flow no more
For him, or sound their silver harmonies;
And there beholds how all the landscape lies
Transfigured with a charm it never wore
In those indifferent early days before
He faced the loneliness of foreign skies;

So earth becomes, to eyes bedimmed with tears
Of that impending change whose silent knell
Sounds at the heart of slowly-waning years
(Even to those who always loved it well),
Transfigured with a charm that more endears,
And touched with beauty indescribable.

ENLARGEMENT.

AROUND us unaware the solemn night
Had hung its shadowy mantle, while we sought
To find each other by the roads of thought;
I felt thy orbit nearing, and a light
Streamed suddenly across my inner sight,
Effulgent, incommunicable, fraught
With some constraining tenderness that caught
My quickened spirit to its utmost height.

And lo! I saw as with the eyes of two,
In that swift moment when thy soul touched mine,
The walls of being widened, and I drew
Near to the portal of a nameless shrine,
A sudden blinding rapture pierced me through,
And in that instant earth became divine.

ON SILENT BATTLE-FIELDS.

UPON the deathless battle-field, where all
The pulses leap responsive to the beat
Of martial music, and amidst the heat
Of mortal strife is heard the inner call,
The nation's need—which ever holds in thrall
Heroic souls—never to know defeat,
But go with high, unshrinking heart to meet
The foe—it would not seem so hard to fall.

But on the fields at home when hope is fled
And only ghosts of former joys remain—
God pity those unknown who daily tread
The desolate, monotonous ways of pain,
And nightly bivouac with their hosts of dead
On silent battle-fields where hearts are slain!

THE RECONCILER.

SHE knew but one desire, one single aim
Consumed her days and robbed her nights of rest—
To reconcile the two whom she loved best,
Who, long estranged, yet of one household came;
And while for this she strove, her gentle frame
And tender heart were often sore distressed,
For all her longing love and pain repressed
Seemed but as fuel added to the flame.

But on that day of silence when she passed
By unseen pathways to the distant spheres,
What life had failed to do, death wrought at last,
For they who through the long, embittered years
Had spoken not, now stood with hands locked fast,
And looked into each other's face with tears.

THE WARDEN.

O FEVERISH heart, that dost forever strain
 Against forbidding bars that still withhold
 Fulfilment of thy hope—thy dream untold,
 Thy longing passion spends itself in vain!
 No distant heights there are for thee to gain,
 The azure deeps where white wings may unfold
 In glimmering dawns or flaming sunset-gold
 Unknown of thee shall evermore remain.

For by thee in thy prison Something stands—
 Some higher shape of self, mayhap—with face
 Compassionate as an angel's, but whose hands
 Shall never set thee free—nay, yesternight
It stood long, silent, gazing into space,
Then made more fast the doors that bar thy flight.

DAWN.

THE night had brooded long, the air was chill,
Across the open fields the frost bit deep,
The restless, formless mists, that seemed to creep
Like ghostly wraiths, had swallowed up the hill;
The sombre pines had ceased their plaint of ill
But yet uplifted pleading arms, the sheep
And stiff-kneed kine were huddled half asleep,
And all the forest hung inert and still;

When on the silence fell a tenser hush,
A film of grayness smote the dark and spread,
And slowly in the east a trembling flush
Shot upward, till the sullen mists, withdrawn,
Showed all the vanquished shadows fled,
And myriad heralds cried, "The Dawn! the
Dawn!"

THE SENSE OF MYSTERY.

I WOULD not lose the sense of mystery
That broods about our little lives and springs
Eternal from the unknown heart of things,
Nor miss by rude familiarity
Perception of the finer harmony
That underlies all dissonance and brings
The unseen to our consciousness and flings
A glory round our way continually.

For they alone shall win their happiness
Who still make room for things inscrutable;
And he who sees the greater in the less—
Who finds in folded leaf or purple bell
The Infinite—doth in himself possess
Some kinship with the daily miracle.

WINTER WHEAT.

THRILLED by the thought of undelaying Spring,
The little emerald blades unfold to greet
Their promised heritage of sun and heat,
With life's wild rapture eager, hastening;
How should they know that Winter yet must bring
Its icy chains to bind the tender feet—
That driving storms of snow and chilling sleet
And javelins of frost shall smite and sting?

Thou, too, O eager heart, that dost aspire
To bring to harvest thy perfected grain,
And reach thy promised heritage of higher
Endowment, must be swept by storms of pain—
Must know the anguish of delayed desire
And feel the biting tooth of cold disdain!

WHEN THOU ART DISTANT.

WHEN thou art distant, then art thou most near,
For though in thy dear presence I am fain
With my great joy forever to remain,
Yet when thou art no longer with me here,
The sum of thee, like music fine and clear,
Steals in upon my being till I gain
So close a sense of thee that I attain
A new relationship divinely dear.

'Tis in the silent hour we most discern
The face of our beloved, and realize
The deeps of our own heart; 'tis when we yearn
With unspent passion that the spirit-eyes
Unclose to Heavenly vision, and we learn
Those narrow ways that lead to Paradise.

THE TEMPLE.

HE BUILT a temple in his youth, so fair—
So lofty in conception and design,
It seemed like some creation half divine,
A fitting place for penitence and prayer.
With selfless zeal he wrought, his only care
To give his best—his all—and build a shrine
That should afar for longing pilgrims shine,
Calling their weary souls to worship there.

But long neglected now the temple stands,
Its crumbling walls with rusted ivy hung,
And he who built it with the eager hands
And shining hope of youth now sits among
The money-changers at the market-place
Suspicious, calculating, cold of face.

BONDAGE.

THROUGHOUT the long, monotonous hours of day,
With lifeless tread and apathetic eyes,
The slave, inured to toil and sacrifice,
Bends all his powers to the master's sway;
But with releasing darkness he can lay
Aside the mask and be himself, and rise
To face the deep serenity of skies
That veil the waiting gods, and weep and pray.

So with my soul, that through the daylight hours
Yields to the world, its master, weary, dumb,
In bondage to the trivial, all its powers,
And yet behind the surface fret and strife
In anguish sees, when night and silence come,
The unattained divinity of life.

NIGHT.

WHO hath not in the silences of night
 Been humbled by the mystery that lies
 Along the vaulted pathway of the skies?
And in the consciousness that worlds of light
Their steadfast courses keep beyond our sight,
 Heard yet again the voice within that cries
 To every fettered soul, bidding it rise
With arms outstretched towards the Infinite?

Upon the threshold of these large, unknown,
 Unlighted chambers of the night we kneel,
And, emptied of the day, contrite, alone,
 The presence of some sentient Power within
The magnitudes of space we dimly feel
 To which the finite spirit is akin.

AT PARTING.

KEEP thou amidst the fulness of thy days
Some little space apart for thoughts of me,
Where all the best I have and am may be
Familiar and essential to thy ways;
Make thou the hours as shining argosies
Emblazoned with the love I bear to thee,
And freighted with my spirit's hidden plea—
At once thy inspiration and thy praise.

For he who keeps within his heart a shrine
Where tender dreams may gather, makes defence
Against encroaching tides that undermine
The soul's integrity and confidence,
And I would have, in every act of thine,
Love's presence conscious to thy deeper sense.

PENIEL.

I HAVE no speech, the rose I plucked is dead,
Faintly is borne to me upon the wind
The dying laughter—I am left behind.
Once I laughed, too, tears now are mine instead!
Gone are the hopes—the dreams on which I fed,
And memories alone remain to bind
My broken days and link me to my kind,
Or ease the desolate ways my feet must tread.

And yet, O God, I know not how to fail!
Within my heart still burns an unquenched fire,
Like Israel of old I must prevail,
Or failing, still reach on to something higher—
They counted *Him* a failure when He trod
Those slopes of Calvary that led to God!

WITH PASSING YEARS.

WE grow more reconciled to Nature's ways,
And more responsive, with the passing years,
Finding in them a solace for the fears
Engendered by the thought of lessening days;
There comes a sense of comradeship that stays
The lonely questioning heart, and more endears
The deep and changeful beauty that appears
More deep and beautiful with every phase.

The brooding tenderness of earth and sky
Becomes more palpable and to our need,
As if some friendly consciousness were nigh—
Some mother element but dimly guessed,
That, gathering nearer, gently sought to lead
Weary and wandering children back to rest.

SANCTUARY.

WITHIN the shelter of thy calm, O Night,
I loose the garish vestures of the day,
With trembling hand unbind and fling away
The cap and bells that made the crowd's delight;
Screened from the world's uncomprehending sight,
Deep in thy healing silences I lay
The bruised and fettered soul that doth but pray
To be encompassed by the Infinite.

Receive my tears, O Night, and with thy space,
Thy unimpassioned vastness, cover me;
Make me to find my natural, lowly place—
Become once more a child, and learn the mood
Of larger things, until obedient, free,
I lose myself within thy magnitude.

DAY AND NIGHT.

WHEN in the affluent splendor of the day,
To heaven's cloudless blue I lift my eyes,
Thrilled with the beauty that around me lies,
My heart goes up on wings of ecstasy;
But when Orion and the Milky Way
Reveal the story of the midnight skies,
And all the starry hosts of space arise—
Mutely I bow in reverence to pray.

And so with life; the daylight of success
Rounds earth and pleasure to a perfect sphere,
But in the night of trial and distress
The quickened soul to vaster realms draws near,
And o'er the borders of our consciousness
Foretokens of the Infinite appear.

ACROSS THE DEEP.

MY LIFE is like a little island strand
 Surrounded by relentless tides that sweep
 Continually from the unknown deep
That stretches far and wide on every hand;
And day by day I watch the glistening sand
 Slip down into the reaching waves that keep
 Their hollow moaning as they nearer creep
To swallow up the foothold where I stand.

And yet I seem, between the wash and swell
 Of those dark tides that mark my life's decline,
To catch the sound as of a distant bell,
 And see the gleam of lights that steadfast shine
Upon a rock-ribbed shore impregnable,
 Where lodge, secure and fearless, souls like mine.

BEYOND THE VIOLET RAYS.

BEYOND the violet rays we do not know
What colors lie, what fields of light abound,
Or what undreamed effulgence may surround
Our dreaming consciousness above, below;
Nor is it far that finite sense can go
Along the subtle passages of sound,
The finer tonal waves are too profound
For mortal ears to catch their ebb and flow.

And there are moments when upon us steal
Monitions of far wider realms that lie
Beyond our spirit borders, and we feel
That fine, ethereal joys we cannot name.
In some vast orbit circling, sweeping by,
Touch us in passing as with wings of flame.

MAKE FRIENDS WITH HAPPINESS.

WHY should we not make friends with happiness?

Life has its grieving moments, it is true,

And daily cares—but O, its rapture, too!

Why should we gather thorns when flowers press

About our feet and sweet, wild things confess

Their inner radiance, as if they knew

There shone for us beyond the steadfast blue

A love that asks no guerdon but to bless?

Foundation for our spiritual home we lay

In all we do and are, and we must lose

The power of inner vision if we stay

Among the shadows grieving, nor possess

Discerning mind and steadfast heart to choose

Those thoughts that make us friends with happiness.

MASKED.

SHE rose to greet her guests with smiling eyes,
 A wealth of rich experience in her face,
 Her movements full of that unconscious grace
 In which a woman's highest power lies;
 One felt the heart beat true and tenderwise
 Beneath the velvet folds and filmy lace,
 Grim sorrow there had seemed to find no place,
 But only peace and love in loveliest guise.

And as with ready wit and kindly mirth
 She led the throng in repartee and jest,
 To us she seemed as one from common earth,
 With all its blighting pain, set far apart
 And rounded in with peace—who could have guessed
 A two-edged sword lay buried in her heart!

NOT BY NATURE'S DOOR.

How often in some vexed or restless mood
 Have I gone forth to nature, seeking there
 Surcease from wounded pride or petty care,
 And thought the flowing stream or shady wood
 And large, impartial calms of solitude
 Would be as arms unseen to lift me where
 My soul should catch a loftier, purer air—
 But O, how little have I understood!

For not by doors of nature or of sense,
 However fair, however dear they be,
 Has come that deep desired influence
 That most reveals and proves myself to me;
 There is a narrower pathway leading hence
 For him who would from tyrant self be free.

IN THE DARK.

WHEN on the black abysses of the night
My little candle throws a trembling beam,
At first too faint and feeble it would seem
To give security to straining sight;
But presently we see its tiny light
Across the perilous pathway sends a gleam
That pierces through the darkness vast, supreme,
And step by step we find our way aright.

So in the vast and limitless unknown,
That wraps us with its fearful night around,
At first the beam by faith or knowledge thrown
Seems but to make the darkness more profound,
But presently one step ahead is shown—
Enough to prove that it is solid ground.

THOUGH BOUND TO EARTH.

THOUGH we are bound to earth by many ties,
And all along the roads whereby we came
A thousand tongues to listening hearts proclaim
Our kinship with the world that round us lies;
Though sunlit fields and woods and arching skies,
And flowers that break in shafts of living flame,
Constrain with beauty all our quickened frame,
Breathing love's messages in sweetest guise;

Yet deeper than all rapture earth may bring
Is that fine sense whereby we are aware
Of something in ourselves that does not spring
From life without or in its fullness share,
But like a captive bird with quivering wing
Strains ever to its native, purer air.

ON SUCH A NIGHT AS THIS.

On such a night as this, six years ago,
 I dreamed beneath the moon of alien skies,
 And saw the Southern Cross in splendor rise
 O'er groves where orange-scented breezes blow;
 Pale, opalescent waves washed to and fro
 On silver shores with soundless melodies,
 Among the jasmine, vagrant fire-flies
 Pierced the wan night with intermittent glow.

Upon me still the soft enchantment lies,
 And now, as then, I feel the ebb and flow
 Of that elusive rapture and surprise
 Which only haunting beauty can bestow—
 And now, as then, my baffled spirit tries
 To rend the imponderable veil *and know*.

THE EVENING HOUR.

THERE is unfailing comfort to be found
In quiet country ways when shadows run
Athwart green pastures with the setting sun,
And coming harvests everywhere abound;
The singing streams half-hidden in the ground,
The orchard slopes, the kine that one by one
Go home for milking now the day is done,
All speak of homes with peace and plenty crowned.

More reconciling thoughts come to the mind
At such an hour; we feel the recompense
Of honest toil—draw nearer to our kind
In spiritual sympathy, and in the sense
Of some enfolding Care that dwells behind
The fixed, dividing walls of circumstance.

CERTITUDE.

FROM regions inaccessible to sight
We catch at times a momentary gleam
As of celestial mysteries that stream
In distant realms of unimagined light;
Then, rapt as from a restless, fevered night,
There breaks upon our little finite dream
The vision of immortal dawn supreme—
The nameless threshold of the Infinite.

Who knows such moments needs no other sign;
Faith proves itself, and in the soul there wakes
Conviction of a purpose, vast, benign;
As Spring thrills through the apathetic clod,
Upon the barren wastes of doubt there breaks
A sudden boundless consciousness of God!

ON MOUNT PILATUS.

I STOOD on Mount Pilatus, freshly crowned
In all the splendor of new-fallen snow,
And heard the bells of myriad flocks below,
Filling the valleys with mysterious sound:
Enchanting cadences, that lingering wound
Among the dreaming hills, elusive, slow,
And bearing in the liquid ebb and flow
An elemental music, faint, profound.

And I have wondered if the joy and pain,
The happy laughter and the anguished sighs,
So strangely blended in our lives, attain
Consistency and sweetness as they rise,
And, woven to one pure, ethereal strain,
Make harmony beyond the tranquil skies.

SINCE KNOWING YOU.

SINCE knowing you I know myself no more ;
All that I was and am—the wrong denied,
The insincerity, rebellious pride,
And selfishness behind the mask I wore,
The cold indifference I knew before
You came, the ills I scarcely sought to hide—
And all the ugly train so long defied,
At last into love's crucible I pour.

My pain and privilege! for sin confessed
Is sin repudiated, all its sting
And power made void. This is the final test,
Love's sacred task and deepest offering ;
Behold, the hope and germ of all my best
Lies in the very worthlessness I bring!

VANISHED YEARS.

SHE sitteth in the sunshine, old and gray,
Her faded kerchief crossed upon her breast,
Her withered form in sober colors dressed,
Her eyes deep-sunken in far memory;
She scarcely sees the children at their play,
But looks beyond them to the crimsoning west—
And still beyond, where everlasting rest
Remains to close and crown her little day.

But on her tranquil and unconscious face,
In lines engraved by joy no less than tears,
The story of her pilgrimage we trace,
For Youth, quick-flying, left his dearer part,
And all the fragrance of the vanished years,
Imperishable, lies within her heart.

THE PELICAN.

UPON a Western prairie once I met
 A flock of pelicans—a glorious sight!
 Now in the sun they gleamed a dazzling white,
 Now, circling, darkened to a silhouette;
 Great-breasted things, with sweeping pinions set
 To rhythmic curves of slow, majestic flight,
 They rose into the measureless blue height,
 Undaunted, radiant—I see them yet.

I see them yet! for when I turn my eyes
 Beyond these city walls of my despite,
 Behold their buoyant forms still sweep the skies
 Like spirits of the air, incarnate, bright,
 And something untamed in me seems to rise
 And with them breast those boundless seas of light!

ABSENCE.

WHEN thou art absent, and the grieving day
Has lost its wonted radiance, I take
For solace all thy looks and ways and make
Them rainbow messengers from thee to stay
The lonely, lingering hours; and as I lay
My gloom amidst thy sunshine there awake
Sweet memories and hopes that often break
To little songs that bear me company.

And then upon me there will sometimes steal
Those incommunicable thoughts that start
The rivers of the heart until I feel
The sudden tremulous rush of all thou art,
And in the fullness of it once more kneel
In reverence at the threshold of thy heart!

KINGS' PALACES.

I VISITED the palaces of kings,
And marvelled at the storied treasure brought
With vast expenditure of time and thought
To play upon the heart's imaginings;
All cunningly devised and priceless things—
Fine sculptured forms, rare, costly gems that caught
The sun, great canvases, and fabrics wrought
With wondrous skill to give the fancy wings.

But, coming forth, there crowded round my way
Such opulence of nature's tapestries,
That I reflected how the humblest may
Inherit all those lavish treasures
Beside which human art is children's play,
And kings' possessions merest travesties.

AS PARSIFAL OF OLD.

AS PARSIFAL of old stood in the hall,
 And saw with silent awe and wondering
 The Holy Grail uncovered by the king—
 Hearing within himself the still voice call;
 So I, but newly wakened, rapt by all
 The sweet enchantments that around me spring—
 Beholding daily in each living thing
 Love's miracle—am held in Beauty's thrall.

As Parsifal of old a knight became
 And gave his powers to a holy quest—
 All baser part consumed as by a flame—
 So I am fain, at Love's divine behest,
 To yield both heart and spirit to the claim
 That life makes visible and manifest.

